

Statement of Congressman Raúl M. Grijalva
Ranking Member, House Committee on Natural Resources
Before the House Appropriations Committee
Tuesday, February 28, 2017

Chairman Frelinghuysen, Ranking Member Lowey, and Members of the Committee, I am pleased to join my colleagues today to ask for your support for the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Subcommittee budget request for the 115th Congress. As the Ranking Member of the authorizing committee, I am acutely aware of how important it is for the success of these programs under this subcommittee's jurisdiction, that these proposals, agencies, and programs are funded at robust levels. I respectfully request that you take into consideration my strong support of the following for FY18.

Endangered Species Act (ESA)

The Endangered Species Act has been incredibly successful in conserving American wildlife. 99 percent of species that have been listed under the Act still survive today, even in the face of extensive habitat loss and degradation. However, if we want the ESA to do more than prevent extinction, we must provide additional funding to develop and implement the recovery plans and landscape level conservation strategies necessary to take species off of life support. Detractors of the ESA say more species should be delisted, but the prerequisite for delisting is recovery. I ask that the committee consider providing additional funding to expedite species delisting through recovery, including through bolstering the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund, which provides competitive grant funding for regional Habitat Conservation Plans that support voluntary species conservation initiatives.

National Wildlife Refuges

The National Wildlife Refuge System provides critical high quality habitat for fish, animals, plants, and other organisms, while at the same time providing incredible recreational opportunities for hunters, anglers, and outdoor enthusiasts of all kinds. A 2015 study found that Refuges generated \$2.4 billion in economic impacts to surrounding communities and returned more than four dollars to taxpayers from every dollar invested. Unfortunately, funding for the Refuge System has remained flat for years, limiting the benefits they can provide to the American people. I support providing significant additional funding for Refuges, in addition to language allowing the Fish and Wildlife Service to seek compensation from parties damaging Refuge resources.

Wildlife Trafficking

In FY 16, Congress funded a request to increase the Fish and Wildlife Service's enforcement budget to help combat the global scourge of illegal wildlife trafficking. I ask that you continue supporting the Service's work by committing additional funding to these efforts. We have made progress working with other governments and partners on the ground in Africa, Asia, and South America to make wildlife trafficking more difficult and less profitable but there is still much to be done if we hope to save elephants, rhinos, sharks, and other species from extinction, and to

cut off the funding these activities provide to organized crime syndicates, terrorists, and insurgent groups.

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

For over 50 years the Land and Water Conservation Fund has been our nation's most effective conservation program. In my district, LWCF funds are currently slated to be used to acquire 177 acres located in the eastern portion of Saguaro National Park along Rincon Creek. Acquisition of the Rincon Creek properties is the park's highest priority due to their resource value and the imminent threat of their being sold for residential development. This is a crucial program that funds projects in every state and it needs to be fully appropriated. I urge the committee to support full funding of \$900 million for LWCF in FY18.

National Conservation Lands

National Conservation Lands protect 27 million acres of cultural and natural treasures managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). They are the crown jewels under the agency's care and deserve robust funding. I urge the committee to support increasing funding levels about the FY16 enacted amount

U.S. Territories and Office of Insular Affairs (OIA)

In FY17, the President proposed increasing Administration of Territories discretionary spending to a total of \$75 million. I recommend increasing the Technical assistance account to further assist the Office of Insular Affairs in helping the islands deal with economic challenges, long-term energy security, protection of natural and cultural resources, national security concerns, and anticipating climate change.

Hardrock Mining Fees

I strongly urge the Committee to adopt the proposal to assess a per-ton fee on material displaced by hardrock mining activities, and to direct those revenues-estimated at \$200 million per year-to cleaning up abandoned hardrock mine sites. Unlike the coal industry, the hardrock mining industry does not contribute to the cleanup of abandoned legacy mine sites, saddling taxpayers with the responsibility to address the nearly 500,000 such sites spread throughout the country.

Onshore O&G Inspection Fees

I ask the Committee to include inspection fees for onshore oil and gas activities as proposed, collecting \$480 million over ten years. I appreciate the Committee's inclusion of offshore inspection fees for Fiscal Year 2017, and ask that those fees be continued in Fiscal Year 2018, with the slight modification to adopt a per-visit fee for production platforms instead of an annual fee. Unlike offshore inspections, however, onshore inspections are still paid for by the taxpayer. The onshore oil and gas inspection fee would be a miniscule burden on the industry, but provide badly needed funds for the Bureau of Land Management's oil and gas program.

Abandoned Mines and Power+

I support the Power+ proposal to accelerate the spending of \$1 billion from the coal Abandoned Mine Land fund to facilitate economic development projects in coalfield communities. This

proposal is similar to H.R. 4456, the RECLAIM Act, which was introduced last Congress by Appropriations Committee Chairman Rogers.

Historic Preservation Fund

I support strong funding for historic preservation programs. Funding for the Historic Preservation Fund will support State Historic Preservation Offices and Tribal Historic Preservation Offices in their efforts to document and catalog our nation's historic resources. Additionally, I support appropriating \$25 million for the Civil Rights Initiative.

Bureau of Indian Affairs

I fully support robust funding for the Bureau of Indian Affairs. This funding is integral to providing much needed BIE education construction, as well as continuing the comprehensive transformation of the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE). In addition, I strongly support increasing funding for Indian Health Service (IHS) so that we may address the healthcare disparities and shortfalls in Indian Country. Finally, I support the reclassification of both BIA and IHS Contract Support Costs (CSC) to mandatory funding beginning in FY2018.

The National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities

These two agencies make up the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities; making them the largest source of federal funding, respectively. Since 1965 both The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) has awarded more than 145,000 grants and The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) has approximately 63,000 grants awarded. Since FY96 NEA has never fully recovered from the 40 percent budget cut from their peak funding year in FY92 of \$176 million. Only recently on FY2017 did the U.S. House of Representatives pass an almost \$2 million dollar increase for NEA nearly reaching \$150 million. After this significant progress, these two agencies now face the threat of termination within our new administration.

I strongly support the survival of both these agencies and increased funding levels.

These agencies contribute greatly to this nation well beyond the aesthetic enjoyment of arts and culture. The arts are an American industry, producing \$704 billion dollars a year with growth in GDP distribution in the last 15 years of 32.5%. America's arts and entertainment are leading exports, with \$75 billion in overseas sales annually. Arts and culture related industries create jobs, attract investments, generate tax revenues, create trade surplus and stimulate local economies through tourism and consumer purchases. These art businesses represent 3.9 percent of all business and 1.9 percent of all employees, respectively. The arts and humanities are not only a big feature of cultural tourism in the United States but the most effective "soft power" this nation utilizes.

In the state of Arizona NEH is the fifth largest non-government employer with 350,000 jobs and over 22 billion in goods and services. NEA has award close to \$5 million into Tucson-area arts nonprofits since 1998. This includes an annual signature arts event held in Arizona's Congressional District #3 that I regularly enjoy with the community, *Tucson Meet Yourself*, where NEA funds account for about 10 percent of their \$350,000 budget. In addition to awarding direct grants to Southern Arizona groups, The Arizona Commission on the Arts is annually supported by the NEA with this fiscal year at \$833,000. This money is then matched by the state

and distributed to nonprofit arts organizations after. Providing federal resources encourages local support, extends the reach of vital programs, promotes quality and diversity, and encourages entrepreneurship.

In addition to contributing to the development and economic growth of our communities, true to their nature, NEA and NEH also provides creative solutions to America's everyday local communities:

- The arts are improving our education systems through the integration of science, technology, engineering, *arts education*, and math known as STEAM. This fosters creativity, innovation, problem solving and critical thinking skills that will make America's future more competitive in the workforce.
- Through the NEA/Walter Reed Healing Arts Partnership established in 2011, the arts are at the forefront of a national effort to support arts and health in the military.
- A literacy problem exists in many rural communities and tribal nations. In Arizona Congressional District#3 NEH has been crucial in addressing this issue in the following ways:
 - 1.) The *Humanities Initiatives at Tribal Colleges and Universities* allows for essential partnership between K-12 and tribal academic institutions to help increase literacy. These partnership projects through continued funding of NEH leads to increased sovereignty, self-determination, and tribal self-sufficiency by increasing literacy.
 - 2.) NEH funds distributed by the state humanities councils allow other rural communities to fund book festivals that attract authors to their removed communities. A recent book festival held in Payson, AZ in July of 2016 yielded attendance numbers of 600 readers of all age groups and brought 95 Arizona authors.

The National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities are economic engines, contributors to solutions, and keeps the proud diverse American history alive. The total amount allocated to these agencies is less than .016 percent of our annual budget. Execution of these agencies will have little impact in reducing the deficit and is not the solution.

Thank you for your consideration of these recommendations.